

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-10 remain in this case for consideration. Claims 1-7 and 9-10 have been amended to better define Applicants' invention.

A. Prior Art Rejections

1. The Invention

Applicants have invented an effective approach to optical communications between satellites. In Applicants' method and related apparatus, a transmitter terminal transmits to a receiver terminal both a tightly bundled lightwave carrying data signals and a wider angle beacon lightwave to assist in receptive alignment of the data carrying lightwave. The receiver terminal has both an acquisition sensor and a receiving sensor which are both involved in using the beacon lightwave to achieve proper alignment of the receiving sensor so that the receiving sensor can receive the tightly bundled data signals.

2. The Cited Art Distinguished

Applicants' claims 1 and 4 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Mendenhall's U.S. Patent No. 6,535,314 ("Mendenhall patent"). Applicants' claims 2, 5 and 10 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over the Mendenhall patent. The Mendenhall patent discloses several techniques for allowing optical communications between satellites. These techniques involve using an acquisition sensor and various other electronic components to track and eventually receive, through successive "uncertainty regions," a single data carrying optical beam.

Unlike Applicants' invention, Applicants find no disclosure in the Mendenhall patent of transmitting from a transmitter terminal both a first tightly bundled lightwave carrying data signals and a second wider angle beacon lightwave to assist in receptive alignment. Moreover, Applicants further find no disclosure in the Mendenhall patent of using the combination of an acquisition sensor and a receiving sensor at a receiver terminal to detect these two lightwaves and, through further receiver terminal processing components, adjust the

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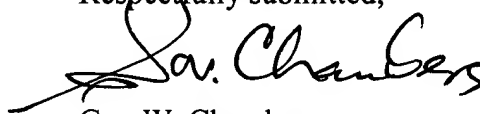
alignment of the receiving sensor so that the receiving sensor can effectively receive the tightly bundled data carrying lightwave. For these reasons, the Mendenhall patent would neither anticipate nor render obvious any of Applicants' presently pending claims.

Finally, the Examiner has indicated that claims 3 and 6-9 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Following the Examiner's suggestion, Applicants have rewritten claims 3 and 6 in independent form to include all the limitations of their current base and intervening claims. Since claims 7-9 depend from now allowable claims, these claims would be allowable also.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at (415) 576-0200.

Respectfully submitted,



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